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INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000990

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HONDURAS COUP SITREP #66 09/29/2009 AS OF
14:00 LOCAL (16:00 EDT)

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 983 AND OTHERS

Diplomatic Process

¶1. (U) OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza announced yesterday, September 28 that de facto president Micheletti had invited the OAS to bring a delegation to Honduras on October 7 with permission to send an advance team on October 12. The Ambassador spoke to President Zelaya this morning. He seemed unhappy by the position taken by the U.S. in the OAS Permanent Council meeting on September 28. He also noted that the regime Foreign Ministry's stance on the presence of the OAS Foreign Minister's was an attempt to run out the clock on the negotiations. The Ambassador and Zelaya also discussed the regime's decree restricting basic constitutional freedoms. Zelaya believes that the regime, despite its public statements, is not likely to quickly reverse the decree. Zelaya added that the regime and its supporters would attempt to avoid reaching an agreement under the San Jose framework and would seek to use the elections as a way out of the crisis. Zelaya predicted that in the absence of an agreement popular resistance would be so intense that elections would not likely be held. Zelaya reiterated his support for the San Jose Accord.

Domestic Political Situation

¶2. (U) De facto president Micheletti announced yesterday, September 28 that he would accept a petition from the Honduran Congress to repeal the decree issued on September 27. Micheletti stated that he would consult with the Supreme Court of Justice, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the presidential candidates before deciding when to reverse the decree. The decree is still in effect and Micheletti has taken no action to withdraw it.

Civil Unrest and Security Environment

¶3. (SBU) Honduran National Police contacts informed Post that under the decree they have the authority to use

force when there are unauthorized demonstrations or groups of twenty or more people. Police also will not allow the media to make calls for insurrection or attack (presumably de facto) government officials. Police contacts believed that the decree would last only through this week (September 29-October 2), but also noted that its repeal depends on how the situation developed.

¶4. (SBU) On September 29, the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Sandra Ponce sent an official request to the Honduran Supreme Court to reverse the executive decree and to declare it without legal effect. The executive decree was the legal basis for the September 28 closures of anti-coup television Channel 36 and radio station Radio Globo by the Honduran Military and National Police. Ponce's request asked that the Supreme Court obtain a full report of the legal basis for the closures from the de facto regime and send it to the Attorney General's office within 5 days.

¶5. (SBU) The final offensive by pro-Zelaya supporters that security forces claimed to expect to occur on September 28 did not materialize. Pro-Zelaya supporters met at the Pedagogical University today September 29, but as of 1330 local (1530 EDT) demonstrators were beginning to disperse. A small group of approximately twenty women protested at the outer military perimeter surrounding the Brazilian Embassy before police convinced them to leave voluntarily. The group then protested peacefully outside the Ambassador's residence for approximately one hour.

¶6. (U) Curfew was imposed from 2200 to 0500 local yesterday September 28. No new curfew has been announced for September

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¶29.

Consular/ACS

¶7. (U) The Consular Section posted a revised warden message yesterday, September 28 informing American citizens of the de facto regime's emergency decree.

Media Update

¶8. (SBU) Police officials told Emboff on September 29 that during the military's closure of anti-coup Channel 36 on September 28 two Guatemalan journalists, Alberto Cardona and Rony Sanchez, were slightly injured but not hospitalized in a scuffle with police outside Channel 36 offices. Post is investigating the circumstances, as well as rumors that the two are now missing. A news article published by Univision later in the day on September 28 quoted Cardona and stated he was in Guatemala.

¶9. (SBU) Post is also investigating unconfirmed reports on the website, Defensoresenlinea.com, that a journalist for the newspaper, "The Liberator," was abducted by unknown plain clothed assailants on his way to cover the closure of Radio Globo. The journalist, Delmer Membreno, was allegedly transported approximately one hour outside of Tegucigalpa where he was physically assaulted and his camera was stolen.

¶10. (SBU) On September 28, the owner of anti-coup television station Channel 36, Esdras Lopez, called Poloff and stated that the head of the Human Rights Committee (CODEH), Andres Pavon, and an unnamed Congressman had told him the military had orders to arrest him that night. Poloff told Lopez that if he felt the threat was credible to consider moving locations or hiring a private security firm. On September 29, Poloff spoke to Lopez who confirmed that he and his family were safe.

Embassy Operations

¶11. (SBU) An EAC meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, September 30 at 1400 local (1600 EDT).

¶12. (SBU) The termination letter for the Millennium Challenge Corporation to the de facto Honduran government will be sent either today, September 29 or more likely tomorrow, September 30.

¶13. (U) The Embassy is open today, September 29, and will remain open unless a curfew is imposed. A curfew has been declared from 2200 to 0500 local (0000 to 0700 ET).

¶14. (SBU) All Mission employees and dependents have been instructed to remain within Tegucigalpa until further notice. No non-essential travel, either personal or official is authorized. All TDY travel into Honduras has been suspended for the week of September 28-October 2. Post will review these policies in an EAC scheduled for September 29.
LLORENS